



News Release

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests &
Thunder Basin National Grassland
<http://fs.usda.gov/mbr>

Contact: Paula Guenther, (970) 723-2721

Popular Snowmobile Trails to Reopen After Bark Beetle Work

(WALDEN, Col. - December 30, 2011) – Logging projects needed to remove beetle-killed trees from road and trail corridors on the Parks Ranger District between Gould and Rand are nearing completion. As snowpack conditions allow, many popular winter routes that have been partially or completely closed over the last year will be reopening for recreation access.

Effective January 1, 2012 riders will be able to travel the designated snowmobile trail from Illinois Pass, over Calamity Pass, to the winter parking area near Gould, and up onto the Colorado State Forest /State Park snowmobile trails system. Along the way riders will also have access to businesses in Gould. Snowmobile trails maintained by the North Park Snow Snakes Snowmobile Club along Forest roads will be groomed as soon as Mother Nature provides enough snow to cover rocks, logs and other hazards along the designated trails.

Popular non groomed side trails to Jack Park / National Forest System Road 758 (NFSR), Silver Creek (NFSR 780) and Owl Mountain (NFSRs 790/791/792) will be open for riding once there is 12 inches of snow on the trails and surrounding terrain.

"Unless we have another record snow pack like last year, groomers and riders are going to need to stay alert to hazards along even the groomed trails," explained Parks Ranger District Winter Trails Coordinator Jon Myers.

Riders will need to be especially careful along groomed portions of NFSRs 740 and 750, where debris from tree removal, road features like gates and posts, and natural hazards including rocks and downed logs may remain exposed through this winter.

"We understand how important these trails are to riders in Jackson County and even riders coming over Illinois Pass from Grand County, so we want to get them groomed and open for public use this season," said U.S. Forest Service Timber Sale Administrator Kevin Bridges. "Hazard tree contractors will be coming back in the spring to do final cleanup once snow melts."

Snowmobiles will share the designated trail with logging traffic for approximately 1/4 mile at the Jack Creek bridge, where activities along NFSRs 742, 743, and side spurs will continue this winter. At this time there will be no snowmobile access from Rand along NFSR 740 while hand falling and hauling continue in that area. In addition, NFSR 792 to the west of Owl Mountain will remain closed to motorized travel while hazard tree hauling is completed on that road segment. Logs are being hauled west from NFSR 792, across BLM lands and out Jackson County Road 21 and Colorado Highways 14/125. NFSR 792 may be available for grooming and riding west of its junction with NFSR 790 later in the winter.

In addition to miles of groomed and non groomed snowmobile trails being reopened, the annual North Park Snow Snakes Poker Run is scheduled for March 3, 2012 along the usual route between the State Forest State Park and National Forest trail systems.

Please stop by or call the Parks Ranger District at 970-723-2700 for current trail information.

###